



TOWN OF WESTFORD STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT FINAL REPORT

**JUNE 15, 2017
5:15 PM – 8:30 PM**

**EVENT HELD AT:
KIMBALL FARM
400 LITTLETON ROAD
WESTFORD, MA 01886**

Jodi Ross – Town Manager

Eric Heideman – Assistant Town Manager



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Executive Summary

The seventh annual Strategic Planning Retreat was held on Thursday June 15, 2016 at Kimball Farm, located at 400 Littleton Road in Westford. We had another great year with many new faces coming out to participate in the brainstorming activities. We had a total of 268 attendees at the event who participated in two facilitated discussion topics. The first topic was the Healthy Westford Committee and Pedestrian Safety Committee and an overview of their initiatives and the second topic was on recreational marijuana. We also had eight poster board exhibits on various topics to educate our residents on the different projects taking place throughout Westford.



2017 Strategic Planning Retreat Agenda

5:15 – 5:30 Registration

5:30 – 5:40 Welcome, opening remarks, and overview of event

Andrea Peraner-Sweet, Board of Selectmen Chair and Jodi Ross, Town Manager

5:40 – 6:30 Facilitated Discussions Session #1

➤ ***Healthy Westford Committee & Pedestrian Safety Committee:***

Introduced by Chris Barrett, Healthy Westford Committee & Chair, Pedestrian Safety Committee

Review of committees' current projects underway, including Complete Streets project, proposed sidewalks, upcoming health fairs, long-term goals and objectives, ideas to promote health and recreation through education and information campaigns, and plans to address litter throughout town.

6:30 – 7:00 Dinner / Poster Exhibits

7:00 – 7:50 Facilitated Discussions Session #2

➤ ***Recreational Marijuana:***

Introduced by Chris Kluchman, Director of Land Use Management

Discussion related to recently approved state legislation allowing recreational use of marijuana. Topics shall include state and local regulations, zoning, potential bylaw options, law enforcement, etc.

7:50 – 8:15 Break for Ice Cream

8:15 – 8:30 Closing Remarks

Poster Exhibits:

1. Town Farm and 12 North Main Disposition
2. Town-Wide Infrastructure Projects
3. Town Facility Capital Project Updates
4. Recreation Survey & Feasibility Study
5. Agricultural Commission Initiatives
6. Dog Park Task Force Update
7. Stormwater Management
8. Economic Development

Health Westford Committee & Pedestrian Safety Committee

Facilitated Discussion Topic #1

Summary of Ideas from Work Groups

Business Collaboration

- Educate businesses on availability of Westford resources: trails, farmers market, conservation areas, bird tours and the like.
- Encourage businesses to expand healthy offerings including bike racks, sports leagues, exercise classes, healthy food and a regular structure for community participation (e.g. day of service).
- Engage business in health of their employees through incentives such as certificates or tax incentives.

Healthy Safe Neighborhoods

- Establishing a “walkable community” is important, but requires a focus on traffic management (including cross walks, traffic lights), speed control and development of sidewalks, to ensure safety.
- Vector management, particularly ticks, requires focus, but no one approach will be enough.
- Tap into existing opportunities to reinforce healthy choices: school lunch offerings, neighborhood block parties, technology and social media.

Community Events

- Encourage events which allow for, and encourage, intergenerational participation.
- Tap into existing resources for program location (e.g. EBC) funding (Westford Cultural Council) and promotion (Westford CAT).
- Establish events that encourage business participation, including “days of service” and charity events.

Walkable Neighborhood/communities

- Speed control is crucial to the success of a walkable community; lowering and enforcing speed limits is fundamental.
- Assist in traffic management by encouraging businesses to stagger work hours and through placement of electronic speed signs on high traffic roads.
- Encourage neighborhood walking through education/reinforcement of walking rules, establishing marked routes, promoting geocaching, and establishing events such as scavenger hunts.
- Available sidewalks must be maintained: they need to be cleared of snow and kept free of poison ivy.

Litter Control

- Continue to promote the “carry in/carry out” philosophy of public spaces while ensuring availability of and collection of, appropriate containers.
- Utilize no-cost/low cost options for litter removal, including neighborhood challenges, Scouts, business volunteering and Dept. of Corrections workers.
- Educate/reinforce some basics: recycling and upcycling education, Westford Pride and proper trash disposal (use of lids).
- Establish incentive and opportunities to reuse and recycle including deposits on alcohol nips and a “put and take” disposal center.

Healthy Eating

- Use our schools to establish good habits: ensure and encourage healthy lunch and snack choices and provide horticulture and nutrition classes.
- Provide a community greenhouse and expand our community garden to multiple locations to allow for increased use and a designated plot for food for the senior center and food pantry.
- Enlist the support of our local restaurants in a “health eating week” and/or establish a Westford designated “seal of approval” for health meals
- Provide fun and engaging educational programs, including a Healthy Westford Cookbook, and food preparation demonstrations on Westford CAT or other venues



Recreational Marijuana

Facilitated Discussion Topic #2

Recreational Marijuana Fact Sheet

Overview of the New Law

The *Regulation and Taxation of Marijuana Act* which legalizes possession of marijuana for “recreational” purposes and allows for the sale of marijuana for recreational purposes, was established when voters approved a ballot initiative in November 2016. This law is **different** from the law that allows for Medical Marijuana, which was approved by voters in November 2012. Outside of their personal residence, adults over the age of 21 may possess up to 1 ounce of marijuana. Within their residence, adults may possess up to 10 ounces of marijuana for personal use. Residents may also cultivate up to 6 marijuana plants per person with a limit of 12 plants per household. Recreational marijuana may not be commercially grown, processed, or sold in Massachusetts without a license issued by the Cannabis Control Commission.

The Recreational Marijuana law provides for:

- personal consumption
- state regulatory structure
- taxation
- licensure of retail sales facilities

Choices for Westford

The law allows for Towns to “opt out” of allowing retail sales of recreational marijuana. This is **different** from Medical Marijuana, where Towns could not prohibit Dispensaries, only regulate them (see sidebar on Medical Marijuana). Here are some **possible** mechanisms the Town may use:

Medical Marijuana is regulated by the state Department of Public Health (DPH). Westford established a Medical Marijuana Overlay District in 2014, mostly along Route 110, with strict guidelines for location and security of a Medical Marijuana “Dispensary”. The Board of Selectmen can decide whether to allow a Dispensary because Towns must provide a letter of support or “non-opposition” for a Dispensary to be approved by DPH. In 2016, the BOS chose not to provide such letter to two proposed dispensaries along Route 110. Per the DPH web site, there are 11 Dispensaries operating in Massachusetts, the closest are in Lowell and one in Ayer.

- October 2017 Special Town Meeting - Warrant article at the Town Meeting that will amend the Zoning Bylaw to put a “Moratorium” on retail sales of recreational marijuana.
- March 2018 Annual Town Meeting - Warrant article with zoning bylaw amendment to allow/regulate or prohibit retail sales of recreational marijuana
 - May 2018 –IF Annual Town Meeting choses to prohibit such retail sales, set a ballot referendum to confirm prohibition of retail sales, as required by current law.

Uncertainty

The legislature is considering whether the law needs further changes. 80 bills have been filed in the legislature to amend the law, but key areas that may see change include:

- Changes in process to prohibit: A newly released House Bill proposes to eliminate the need for the ballot referendum if the local government choses to prohibit retail sales by local bylaw.
- Amount of Tax: The new law establishes a 3.75% tax on sales, but other states have much higher tax rates: Washington 37%, Colorado at 29%, and Oregon and Alaska 25 %. MA Cities/Towns may elect to add up to 2% local option taxes and the state sales tax of 6.25 % applies as well. The new House Bill proposes to increase taxes to a total of 28% (6.25% sales tax, 16.75% state marijuana tax and 5% local tax).
- State and Federal Law conflicts: The state seeks to resolve the conflict between the current US Attorney General position that Marijuana remain a schedule 1 drug and that greater enforcement is needed by the Department of Justice (DOJ). The previous administration’s attorney General issued guidelines to the DOJ and states that had legalized marijuana. The Massachusetts Treasurer has requested guidance from the US Attorney General on this matter.

Frequently Asked Questions

Downloaded from State Treasurer’s web site June 13, 2017.

When did the law take effect?

The law took effect on December 15, 2016.

What aspects of the law took effect on December 15th?

Although licenses for cultivation, manufacture, testing and retail sales will not be issued until July of 2018, certain personal use provisions allowed for persons 21 years or older went into effect on December 15, 2016. That includes the possession of up to 1 ounce of marijuana, of which 5 grams may be marijuana concentrate, as well as the home growth provisions which allow possessing up to 10 ounces of marijuana in your primary residence and 6 plants per resident, but no more than 12 plants per household. For more specific information, please refer to Massachusetts General Laws, chapter 94G ("Chapter 94G").

Where can I grow my plants?

Plants can only be grown or processed in your primary residence in a locked or secured location. And, you cannot grow the plants in a place in your residence where someone can see them from a public space with the use of binoculars, aircraft, or other optical aids.

When will the Cannabis Control Commission be appointed?

Chapter 94G requires the Treasurer to appoint the Cannabis Control Commission ("CCC") by September 1, 2017.

Will there be employment opportunities with the Cannabis Control Commission?

Once appointed, the CCC will need to fill key positions. Information about employment opportunities will be posted publicly at a later date.

When will regulations be issued?

Chapter 94G requires the CCC to promulgate regulations by March 15, 2018.

When can I apply for a license?

Applications are currently not available. Applications will become available after the appointment of the CCC. Chapter 94G requires that the CCC accept certain license applications by April 1, 2018.

What kind of licenses can I apply for?

Applications for a retail, manufacturer, cultivator, or testing facility license will be available.

How much will it cost to apply for a license?

The CCC, once appointed, will decide what fee(s) will be charged when applying for a particular license. However, Chapter 94G limits the amount that can be charged to a maximum of 1) \$3,000 for an initial application; 2) \$15,000 for recreational marijuana retail license; 3) \$15,000 for recreational marijuana manufacturer license; 4) \$15,000 for recreational marijuana cultivator license; and 5) \$10,000 for recreational marijuana testing facility license.

Can I smoke or consume recreational marijuana/marijuana products in public?

In general, no, you cannot smoke recreational marijuana in a place where you are prohibited from smoking tobacco and you cannot consume recreational marijuana in a public place. Chapter 94G contains an exception for certain marijuana establishments.

Can I drive with recreational marijuana in my car?

In general, you cannot have an open container of recreational marijuana/marijuana product in the passenger area of your car while on the road or at a place where the public has access. Also, Chapter 94G does not change the existing penalties for operating a car, etc. if you are impaired by marijuana/marijuana product and you cannot consume marijuana while operating a car, etc. For specific information, see Chapter 94G.

Can I smoke or consume recreational marijuana/marijuana edibles at work?

In general, your employer still has the authority to limit your consumption of marijuana in the workplace. See Chapter 94G for specific information.

Will this new law impact my medical marijuana registration?

At this time, no. It is anticipated that this new law will not impact medical marijuana, which is a separate program overseen by the Department of Public Health.

Why have some of the original ballot initiative deadlines been changed?

Effective December 30, 2016, the Governor signed into law a bill extending by 6 months some of the deadlines contained in the original ballot initiative. For example, the deadlines for the appointment of the Cannabis Control Commission and the Cannabis Advisory Board, and acceptance of license applications were extended. As noted above, however, certain provisions went into effect on December 15, 2016 as planned under the ballot initiative.

DISCLAIMER: *The above questions and answers are provided for general information only and not intended to be legal advice. Individuals should review M.G.L. c. 94G and seek separate legal advice regarding their specific circumstances. Please also note that the answers to the FAQs are subject to change and based upon the current language of M.G.L. c. 94G. This site will be updated regularly and users should return to this site periodically for newly submitted questions and associated answers and/or updates.*

Resources Available:

Recreational Marijuana – Massachusetts Treasurers Office

<http://www.mass.gov/treasury/marijuana/>

Medical Marijuana – Massachusetts Department of Public Health

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/hcq/medical-marijuana/>

Town of Westford

<https://www.westfordma.gov/286/Substance-Abuse-Prevention>

Marijuana Use Q&A

- 1. How long does it take for marijuana to reach peak levels in the brain?**
 - a) 10 seconds
 - b) 90 seconds
 - c) 10 minutes**
 - d) 90 minutes

- 2. How long after smoking marijuana are mental and physical abilities weakened?**
 - a) One hour
 - b) Three or four hours
 - c) Twelve to sixteen hours
 - d) Twenty-four hours**

- 3. On the most recent Survey administered last year in the Westford School System, what percentage of students answered yes to the question: Ever Used Marijuana?**
 - a) 13%
 - b) 20%**
 - c) 35%
 - d) 60%

- 4. On the most recent Survey administered last year in the Westford School System, what percentage of students answered yes to the question: Recent Marijuana use (past month)?**
 - a) 13%**
 - b) 20%
 - c) 35%
 - d) 60%

- 5. How does risk of lung cancer for a marijuana smoker compare to a tobacco smoker's risk?**
 - a) Marijuana causes little risk of lung cancer.
 - b) Marijuana contains about 50% more of the cancer-causing chemical benzopyrene than tobacco contains.
 - c) Marijuana contains about 50% less of the cancer-causing chemical benzopyrene than tobacco contains.**
 - d) Marijuana contains a larger number of cancer-causing chemicals in greater amounts than tobacco contains

6. **THC 'mimics' which neurotransmitter in the brain?**
- a) Anandamide
 - b) Serotonin
 - c) Dopamine
 - d) Norepinephrine
 - e) Epinephrine
7. **Which of the following is not a short-term negative effect of marijuana use?**
- a) Inability to sleep
 - b) Distorted sense of sight
 - c) Elevated heart rate
 - d) Increased risk of injury
8. **Does marijuana deposit tar in the lungs, the way tobacco smoking does?**
- a) No
 - b) Yes, but somewhat less than tobacco
 - c) Yes, about the same as tobacco
 - d) Yes, about two times as much as tobacco
 - e) Yes, about five times as much as tobacco
9. **How does marijuana affect a male's ability to father a child?**
- a) It makes him impotent and sterile
 - b) It kills most of the sperm cells in his body
 - c) It decreases sperm count
 - d) It decreases sperm count and make abnormal sperm
 - e) It has no effect on a male's ability to father a child
10. **What effect does marijuana not have when used during pregnancy?**
- a) Increases the miscarriage rate
 - b) Causes severe facial and limb abnormalities
 - c) Causes lower birth weight, leading to health problems
 - d) May cause brain damage in the fetus
11. **Which of the following signs of addiction do most marijuana abusers not suffer?**
- a) Withdrawal symptoms: heavy sweating, abdominal cramps, racing heart, nausea, and dizziness
 - b) Increased tolerance (the need for more and more to feel the same effect)
 - c) Compulsive drug craving and drug seeking
 - d) Continued use despite negative consequences in life

Results of Preference “Ballots”

33 Allow Recreational retail sales facilities

14 Not Sure

112 Prohibit Recreational retail sales facilities

Attendee Written Comments Received:

1. I would need to do more research of the topic. I think it is beneficial for medical use.
2. If Westford doesn't sell it, someone else will. It's going to be here. Let's benefit from the taxes and regulation.
3. How to measure whether someone is impaired? Like breathalyzer for alcohol.
4. If it helps with stopping Heroin / Pills / and other hard drugs, all for it. Legalize it to all the public.
5. Marijuana is bad.
6. My thoughts have always been that alcohol has destroyed more lives (the drinks and his/her family) than pot ever did. As long as we educate around pot and put some safeguards into place re: DUI, I have no problem legalizing it. I am not a pot smoker myself.
7. If Marijuana is not allowed than alcohol should be prohibited too!
8. If towns around Westford are selling it we might as well sell and gain tax money. Not much different than buying alcohol in town.
9. There is zero benefit to the Town. 2% tax isn't worth it!
10. The town of Westford voted against recreational marijuana so we should vote to prohibit retail sales of marijuana in Westford. We are a family oriented town that promotes healthy living.
11. NO!

12. Westford is a NIMBY town. Residents say no cell towers, no farm to table restaurant, no asphalt plant, no traffic lights, no sidewalks, no bike paths. The people of Massachusetts cast their votes in favor of recreational marijuana being legal and sellable. We have liquor stores in Westford. Marijuana should be available too.
13. Only medicinal.
14. 1. The 2% tax is not worth the problems it will bring. 2. The increased supply due to commercial sale will make diversion to the young, at a greater scale than now, inevitable. 3. It would be a cash business which would present significant security risks to the town (days of armed robbery). 4. There is evidence that suggests MV (fatalities) will increase. 5. The revenue received through a local govt tax would not adequately support local enforcement of regulations, which is essential to keep this orderly.
15. We don't need to be a magnet for impaired driving.
16. The marijuana Q & A was very negative with a bias against marijuana use. It doesn't list any positive aspects to marijuana use.
17. Selectman need to stand strong against sales in Westford. Do not fold to the pressures that others are willing and able to oppose. Support the Town's residents on this one. Do not follow another agenda because "It is the thing to do."
18. My main concern is whether marijuana usage can be screened for in the same way alcohol can. Impaired driving/working/etc. are a major concern.
19. If there are Marijuana everywhere and people consume and get mad. How should we do?
20. Why I am against the Sale of Recreational (or Medical) Marijuana in the town limits of Westford.
 - It's against Federal law
 - Increase the opportunity for people to access a controversial and potentially harmful substance
 - Facilitates the opportunistic sale and exposure of our children to a potentially harmful substance.

- Increase Westford from becoming known as a center of substance abuse sales (“Westford is a drug Town”)
- Sets an example to other Towns, especially abutting towns, that Westford will not tolerate a potentially harmful substance
- Creates the dependence of the Town on Marijuana taxes
- Increases the threat of robbery to case sales of Marijuana
- There is no economic advantage to having sales in Westford (Federal Banks will not accept “marijuana money”)
- Encourages entry of non-Westford people who want to defy Federal Law
- Marijuana usage is suspected of leading to other abuses such as opioids
- Potentially higher traffic and personal accidents
- No proven method to detect excessive personal marijuana usage

Town-Wide Infrastructure Projects

INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



2017 CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

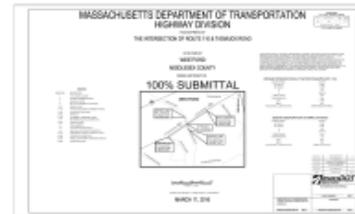
MAIN STREET RECONSTRUCTION

- Reconstruction of entire road between Depot Street & Tadmuck Road (approx. 4,000 feet)
- New sidewalk between Tadmuck Road and the Main Street Convenience Store Plaza
- Reconfigure Depot Street and Main Street intersection
- Replace water distribution, drainage and gas infrastructure
- Town funded construction project
- Construction estimate = \$3 million



LITTLETON ROAD (ROUTE 110) & TADMUCK ROAD INTERSECTION

- Project goal is to improve vehicular and pedestrian safety as well as reduce traffic delays
- Improvements include: installation of a traffic signal, left turn lanes, sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes and stormwater drainage improvements
- Expansion of the Littleton Road sidewalk network that will now extend from this intersection to Boston Road & Cornerstone Square
- Approx. 3,000 feet of pavement rehabilitation
- MassDOT funded construction project
- Construction estimate = \$2.4 million



COMPLETE STREETS IMPROVEMENTS

- New crosswalks connecting Main Street sidewalks to Town Common sidewalk
- Re-alignment of the Boston Road & Main Street intersection to improve public safety
- Relocate Main Street crosswalk to a safer location directly in front of Town Hall
- Install new sidewalk along Concord Road that will connect to the Robinson School
- Install rapid flashing pedestrian crossing beacons at the Concord Road and Howard Road intersection
- New curb alignment and crosswalk at Town Common & Parish Center for the Arts
- Replace crosswalk and flashing school beacons at the Norman E. Day School
- MassDOT grant funded construction project with supplemental local funds
- Construction estimate = \$415,000



PLAIN ROAD SIDEWALK

- Installation of 2,200 feet of new sidewalk from Nutting Road to the Nabnasset School
- Drainage system improvements & gas system replacement
- Town funded construction project
- Construction Estimate = \$475,000



INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



UPCOMING PROJECTS

PROSPECT HILL WATER STORAGE TANK REPLACEMENT

- Replace riveted steel water storage tank (originally constructed in 1907) with new welded steel composite, elevated tank
- Increase storage capacity from 172,000 gallons to 600,000 gallons to meet fire protection needs
- Water Enterprise funded construction project
- Construction estimate = \$3.2 million
- Construction scheduled for Fall of 2017



GROTON ROAD (ROUTE 40) & OAK HILL ROAD INTERSECTION

- Project goal is to improve vehicular safety at the intersection which has an elevated crash rate
- Improvements include: installation of a traffic signal, left turn lanes, sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes and stormwater drainage improvements
- Install new 12' x 7' precast box culvert at Gilson Brook
- Expand sidewalk network that will now link Russell's Way, Betty Lane, Sweetwood Circle and the Ace Hardware Plaza
- Approx. 2,600 feet of pavement rehabilitation
- MassDOT funded construction project
- Construction estimate = \$3.3 million
- Construction scheduled for Spring 2018



GROTON ROAD (ROUTE 40) & DUNSTABLE ROAD INTERSECTION

- Project goal is to improve vehicular safety at the intersection which has an elevated crash rate
- Improvements may include: installation of a traffic signal, left turn lanes, sidewalks, crosswalks and stormwater drainage improvements
- Extend existing water distribution system from St. Augustine Drive
- MassDOT funded construction project
- Construction estimate = \$2.4 million
- Construction scheduled for Spring 2019



BEAVER BROOK BRIDGE

- Replace two 10' wide, aging metal culverts that convey Beaver Brook into Forge Pond with a new single span bridge structure
- MassDOT funded construction project
- Construction estimate = \$1.6 million
- Construction anticipated within next 5 years



INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

BOSTON ROAD SURVEY & CONCEPTUAL ROAD DESIGN

- Complete a right-of-way & existing conditions land survey of Boston Road
- Prepare conceptual road design options for the future reconstruction of Boston Road
- Survey & conceptual design work is being funded by the town
- Project Cost = \$75,000
- Estimated Completion = Spring 2018

ROAD SAFETY AUDITS

- Conduct Road Safety Audits (RSAs) at the following high priority locations: Griffin Road (entire length), Carlisle Road & Concord Road intersection, Plain Road & Depot Street intersection, and Town Farm Road & Forge Village Road intersection
- Identify both short and long term measures that will improve roadway safety at these locations
- Town funded project
- Project Cost = \$35,000
- Estimated Completion = Summer 2017

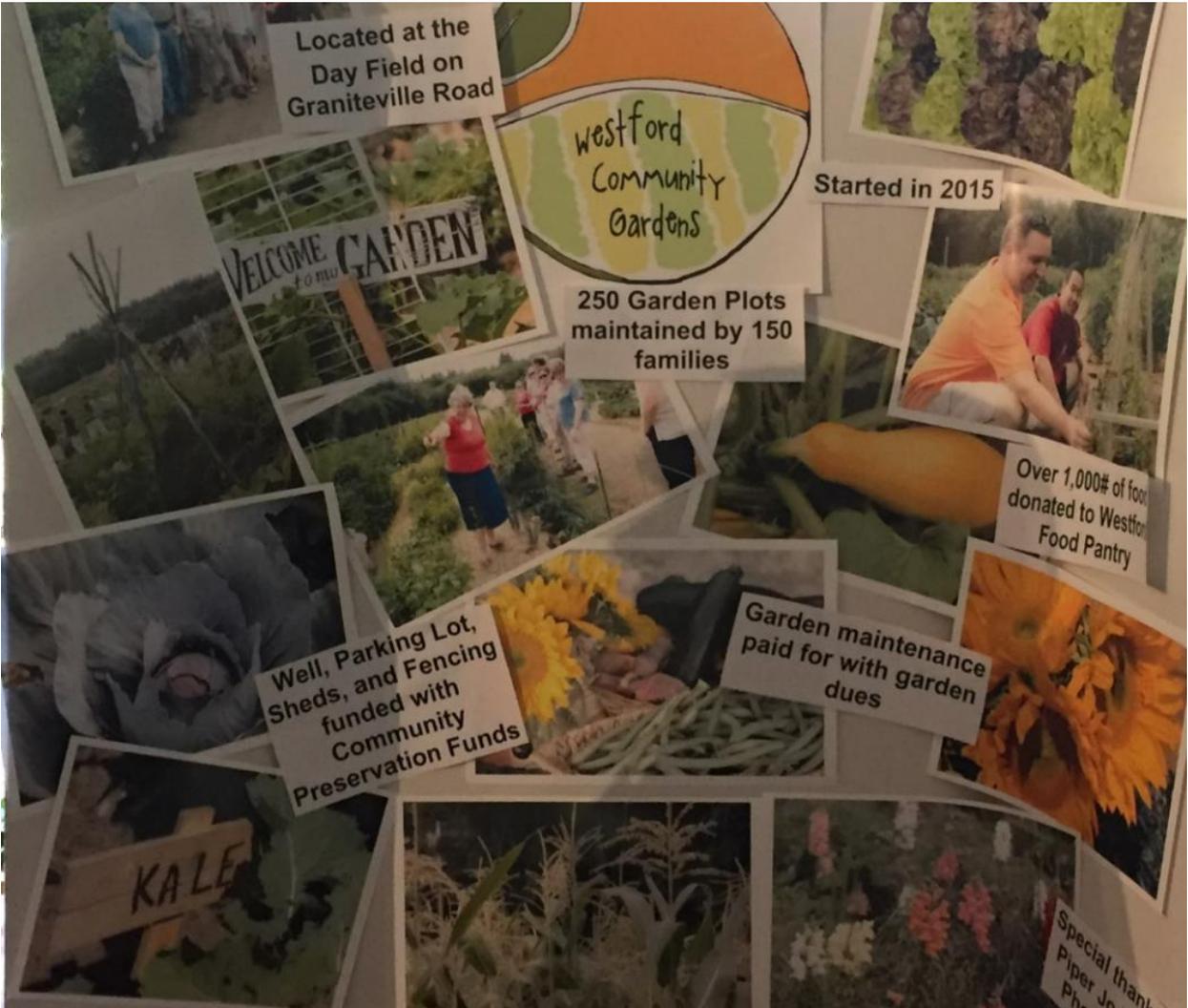
STORMWATER MANAGEMENT MASTER PLAN (SWMMP)

- The SWMMP will provide guidance for Westford's stormwater program
- Goals include preserving water quality, preventing flooding, maintaining high quality drinking water, complying with federal and state regulations & identifying long-term funding strategies
- Town funded project
- Project Cost = \$300,000
- Estimated Completion = Summer 2017

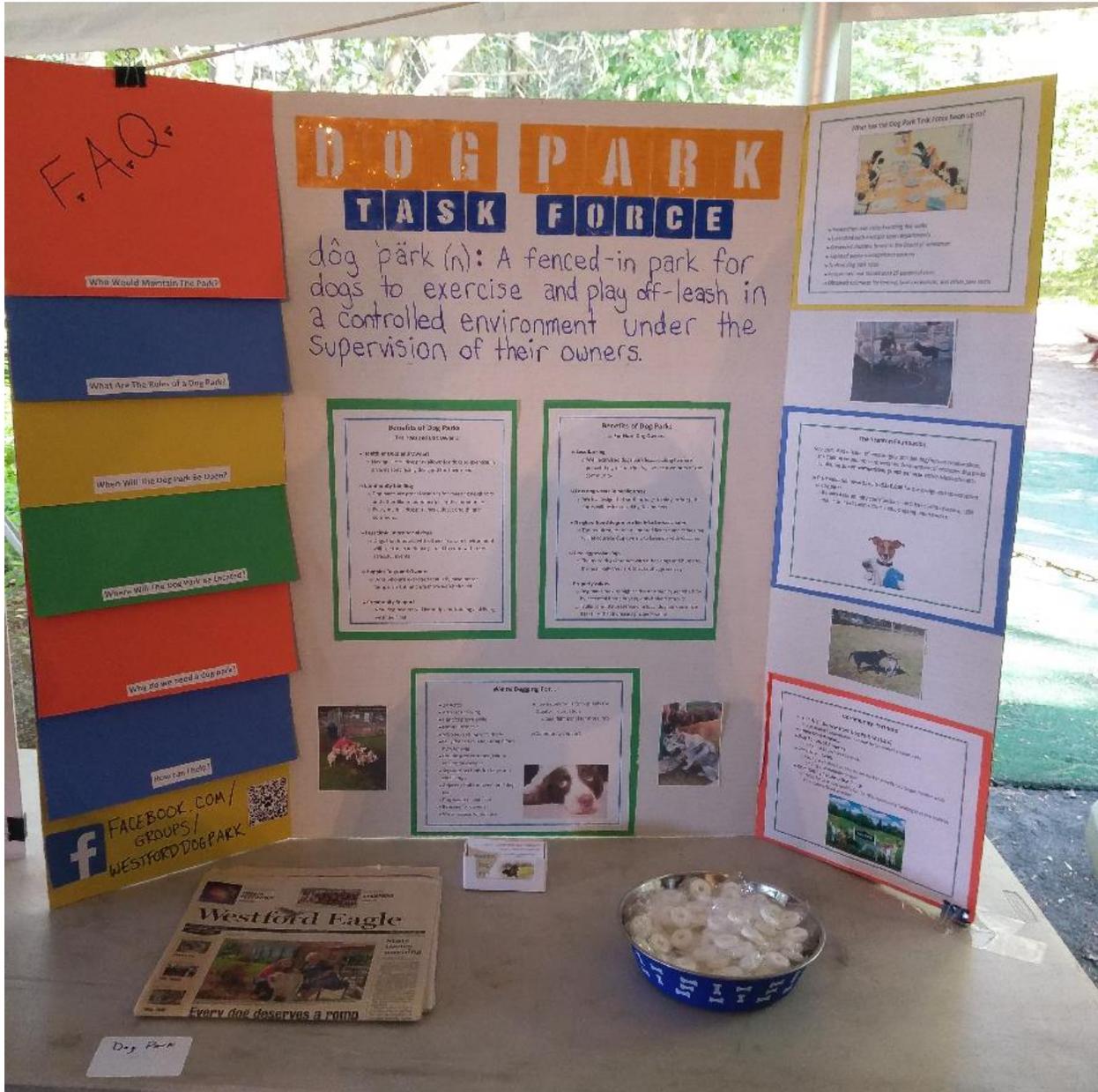
PAVEMENT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

- The Town recently implemented a new GIS based asset management tool to assist the Highway Department in developing the town's annual pavement management program
- All town roads were inspected and given a rating based on surface conditions
- The tool uses a cost-benefit analysis approach to select the most cost effective repairs and to help prioritize paving work
- MassDOT Chapter 90 funded project
- Project Cost = \$56,500
- Estimated Completion = Completed

Agricultural Commission Initiatives



Dog Park Task Force Poster Exhibit



Photographs from the Event







